

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN SA 02698 311458Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 IO-13 OMB-01 SY-05 HA-05
EB-08 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 MCT-01 MCE-00
ACDA-12 /113 W
-----022430 010413Z /17

R 311400Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SAL ADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8242
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JTDE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS, CZ
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 2698

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ASEC, SHUM, ES
SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR GIRDS FOR CONFLICT

1. AS THE POLITICO-SECURITY SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR
DETERIORATES, WE ENCOUNTER MOUNTING INDICATIONS THAT
ADVERSARIES ARE ARMING AND OTHERWISE PREPARING THEMSELVES
FOR A CONFLICT WHICH THEY INCREASINGLY SEE AS INEVITABLE.

2. SO THAT WASHINGTON OFFICES MAY SHARE SOME OF THE
"FEEL" OF THE LOCAL SITUATION, HERE ARE SOME ILLUSTRATIVE
INSTANCES:

A. A RECENT DISCOVERY OF SMALL ARMS BEING SMUGGLED
INTO THE COUNTRY M SOPHISTICATED CONTAINERS SUGGESTS
THAT THERE MAY WELL BE A CONTINUING VOLUME OF SUCH
MOVEMENT;
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B. ONE SURVIVING RELATIVE OF AN ASSASSINATED MEMBER
OF THE ELITE IS RELIABLY REPORTED TO HAVE FORMED AND
ARMED HIS OWN STRIKE FORCE NOT FOR DEFENSE BUT FOR THE
PURPOSE OF SEEKING OUT LEADERS OF VIOLENCE-PRONE GROUPS
ON THE EXTREME LEFT;

C. ANOTHER MEMBER OF A WELL-KNOWN FAMILY HAS
REPORTEDLY FORMED HIS OWN BAND OF SECURITY PERSONNEL FOR
UNSPECIFIED PURPOSES;

D. IN ADDITION TO ARMED BODYGUARDS AND CHAUFFEURS,
VIRTUALLY EVERY MEMBER OF THE ECONOMIC ELITE AND OFFICIALS
OF THE GOES NOW CARRY SIDEARMS, EVEN TO FAMILY AND SOCIAL
FUNCTIONS OF ALL TYPES;

E. ACCIDENTIAL DISCOVERY BY A PRIVATE CITIZEN OF A
LARGE NUMBER OF BOXES AND A CHANCE LOOK INTO ONE OF THEM
RECENTLY TURNED UP WHAT WAS DESCRIBED TO US AS A SIZEABLE
SHIPMENT OF SUBMACHINE GUNS (SEEMINGLY OF GERMAN MANUFACTURE)
WHICH WERE EXPLAINED AWAY AS BEING "FOR THE PEASANTS";

F. WE HEAR REPEATEDLY THAT CUBAN EXILE AND NORTH
AMERICAN PERSONNEL TRAINED IN WEAPONS HANDLING ARE BEING
IMPORTED BY
WEALTHY SALVADORANS TO SERVE AS SECURITY GUARDS
FOR THEM, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR PROPERTIES.

G. THE PURVEYING OF SECURITY AND SECURITY GUARDS IS
DESCRIBED AS SAN SALVADOR'S BIGGEST "GROWTH INDUSTRY," WITH
SUPPLY RUNNING CONSIDERABLY BEHIND DEMAND.

3. PERHAPS A REFLECTION OF ALL THIS IS THE FACT
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THAT THE EMBASSY'S FIFTEEN LOCAL SECURITY GUARDS HAVE
JUST REQUESTED A 50 PERCENT PAY INCREASE.
DEVINE

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Message Attributes

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